

# Rejoice in Christ as Priest

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to read Psalm 110, and it's one of the most quoted psalms in the New Testament. Chances are, according to scholars, David, it is a psalm of David.

He most likely wrote this psalm. For seven years, he had been king of one tribe, Judah, and he had a battle with the Jebusites and took over the town of Salem.

And as he took it over, all the other tribes were gathering together to make him king over all of Israel. And in doing so, inspired by the Holy Spirit, knowing who was there in Salem, Melchizedek, he wrote this psalm about the Messiah who was to come, about one of his descendants, putting all of this together for us.

And so, in Psalm 110, beginning in verse 1, it says this, The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

The Lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying, rule in the midst of your enemies. Your people will volunteer freely in the day of your power.

[ 1 : 19 ] In holy array from the womb of the dawn, your youth are to you as the dew. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord is at your right hand. He will shatter kings in the day of his wrath. He will judge among the nations. He will fill them with corpses. He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.

He will drink from the brook by the wayside. Therefore, he will lift up his head. Father, we thank you for the reading of your word. Lord, we pray that by your spirit you would illuminate our minds, help us to understand what it says, and that your spirit would empower us to live the way that you have called us to live.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. One of the ways that you begin to appreciate someone, you begin to delight and enjoy someone, is by spending time with them, by understanding more about them.

This past summer, my wife and I, we celebrated 32 years of marriage. It's exciting to me because when we met, you know, I loved her very much at the very beginning, and the longer we've been together, the more that I have learned about her.

[ 2 : 44 ] But one of the things that we often don't account for is that through 32 years, the more that she's gotten to know the Lord, the more that she has changed to be more like Christ, which means that there's more of her for me to grow and learn and love.

And one of the things about the Christian life is that that is the way God designed things, not only in marriage, not only in relationships, but in our relationship with him, that the more we come to know who he is, the more we come to love him.

And so we started this series looking at the offices of Christ. Last week, we looked at Christ as the prophet. Today, we're going to look at Christ as the priest. Next week, we're going to look at him as king.

And by learning these things and understanding these things and growing in our depth of knowledge about these things, it helps us to learn to love and appreciate Christ more.

As a matter of fact, there's something about Christ being priest that impacts our lives in the most central way.

[ 3 : 55 ] And once we see that, we should be able to step out today from this sermon and go, I love Jesus even more. And so my prayer is that you will be impacted in that way.

So as we begin, I want to cover three things. And we're just, again, looking at verse 4. I want to cover the family of Christ as priest, the function of Christ as priest, and the faithfulness of Christ as priest.

So family, function, and faithfulness. Those are my points. You should be able to keep up pretty easily, I think. When we look at the family of Christ as priest, we're looking at the very end of verse 4 where it says, after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, we're going to introduce and talk a little bit about Melchizedek because it's important for two reasons. Number one, Jesus is from the tribe of Judah, and priests were to only come from the tribe of Levi.

As a matter of fact, there was a king, King Uzziah, who attempted, though he was in the tribe of Judah, he attempted to be a priest. He went into the temple to try to make sacrifices himself.

[ 5 : 10 ] And God struck him with leprosy. And you can find Uzziah in his story. You can probably connect to him in Isaiah chapter 6 because it was the year that he died that Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up.

But there's a second reason that we want to take a look at Melchizedek, and that is this.

Melchizedek and certain facts about who he is stands as a prefigure, stands as a foreshadowing, stands as an object lesson for the nation of Israel to understand what the Messiah was going to be like.

In other words, there's so many things about the Old Testament that were meant to be object lessons for the people of Israel so that they could understand who the Messiah was, who God was, and what his redemption was all about.

And one of these things happens to be the priest Melchizedek. Now there's a lot of people that have a lot of things to say about Melchizedek. You can go chase out different groups that have all kinds of things to say.

And I'm just here to tell you, the only inerrant, infallible information we have about Melchizedek is in the Bible. And so whatever else anybody will tell you about Melchizedek, it is untrue because the Bible tells us the truth.

[ 6 : 31 ] And so I'm going to pull from both Genesis chapter 14 and Hebrews chapter 7, and I'm going to just summarize for you some facts about Melchizedek that we need to see.

The first is that he was the king of Salem. Now I mentioned a while ago that David conquered the Jebusites and took over the city Salem. That became modern-day Jerusalem.

It's interesting because Salem is the word shalom. It's the word for peace. So he was a king of peace, if you want to say that. Also, his name means king of righteousness.

In Hebrew, the word for king is melech, and the word for righteousness is the end of his name because all of a sudden I just can't say it. Melchizedek is that Z-sounding part of the word.

So he's the king of Salem. Bear with me. He's the king of righteousness. It also tells us that he was the priest of the Most High God. It tells us that when Abraham returned from his rescue mission, chapter 14 of Genesis, from rescuing Lot as well as all these other people, that he gave a tithe to Melchizedek, and Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

[ 7 : 42 ] It tells us in Hebrews that he was without father or mother or ancestor. In other words, we know nothing about where he came from. We know nothing about when he died.

It's as though he never died. That is the important part of Melchizedek's story. In other words, he seemed to be as though he was a man without beginning or end.

Now, whatever else anybody tells you, that is the most important piece because that is what gets us into Jesus as a priest.

Melchizedek, as this prefigure, as this foreshadowing object lesson of what the Messiah was going to be like, Paul tells us in Hebrews chapter 7, verse 14 through 16.

I think I have this up on the screen for you. He says this, For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah. We just talked about that. And in connection with that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests.

[ 8 : 45 ] Verse 15. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek. Now, let me tell you what's going on.

For Israel to be able to draw close to God, to be reconciled to God, a priest from the tribe of Levi had to make sacrifices for them before they could come to God. And what he's saying is that Jesus is a priest, but he's not of Leviticus.

He's not of the Leviticus tribe. And it becomes evident because another priest arises after Melchizedek. In other words, there was Melchizedek and there was Jesus.

There are no other priests in between Jesus and Melchizedek, and there are no priests now, just Jesus. Right? So then verse 16, who's become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement, the law required priest, the law required priest of the tribe of Levi, but he became a priest, but by the power of an indestructible life.

That is amazing. You may be sitting there going like, what? I don't get it. All right, then hang on. Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, Melchizedek, and all of the Jews would have immediately be thinking, the king, priest, without beginning, without end, who blessed our father Abraham.

[10:16] So as they see Jesus being said that he is now a priest after the order of Melchizedek, the focus is, is that he is a priest, not because he's claimed to be a priest, not because he's of the right genealogy, but he's a priest because he has the power of an indestructible life.

That's why he's a priest. That's why he ever lives to make intercession. And here's the point of that. Jesus' power of his indestructible life is what our salvation is built upon.

This means our salvation is secure. Once a person is truly saved, their salvation and their saved soul is preserved by God for all eternity because of the power of his indestructible life.

Salvation comes from one who has an indestructible life. We have salvation to the uttermost because he has this power of this indestructible life.

We are secured by the same power that makes Christ a priest forever. Now, where this hits rubber to road is in a question like this.

[11:45] How do you know you're saved? That's a very important question. How do you know you are saved?

Your answer to that question is going to be revealing, and I'm going to see if I can offend all of you in just a moment. Because if your answer to that question, how do you know you're saved?

If the answer to that question is because I blank, then you've got a problem. How do you know you're saved?

Because I was baptized. You've got a problem. How do you know you were saved? Because I joined the church.

You've got a problem. How do you know you were saved? You ready? Because I prayed the sinner's prayer. Because I asked Jesus in my heart.

[12:53] You see, the focus of all of those is a focus upon what I have done and not the power of the indestructible life of our high priest. How do you know you were saved?

You're saved because Jesus. You understand what I'm saying? We cannot let the moment go.

You see, here's the thing. Anything that we answer that question with becomes the very thing that our hope rests upon. And if you can imagine, as Jonathan Edwards described, yourself as a spider at the end of a web hanging over the pit of hell and you say to yourself, what keeps me from being dropped into this hell?

Is it my baptism? Is it my church membership? Is it my reading of scripture? Is it my good deeds?

No, it is nothing but the mere pleasure and grace and mercy and the power of the indestructible life of Jesus Christ.

That's what keeps you from plummeting all the way into hell. So we have to, as Christians, test ourselves to see if we are in the faith.

[14:06] That comes from 2 Corinthians 13, verse 5. Our salvation is secure in Christ, but we should never take it for granted.

And we should always be testing ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Is my faith built upon my faith or is my faith in Christ?

We want our faith to be in Christ. And so let me give you three questions that you could ask yourself to test yourself to look at whether or not you are truly saved.

Number one, do you believe the things about Jesus are true and they're not made up? That's the first level. I mean, if you don't believe Jesus really existed, then we don't need to go any further.

If you don't believe he really existed, then you're not a Christian, you're not saved. But if you believe the things about Jesus and you believe they're all true, then that's the first level. We got that. We need to keep going, but we at least need that.

[15:12] Secondly, do you look to Jesus' death and resurrection to protect you from God's wrath to come and to keep you out of hell? Do you look to Jesus' death and resurrection to protect you from God's wrath to come and to keep you out of hell?

Go back to that spider. What is it that you would say needs to go between you and the flame that God would say, okay, never mind, you're not going to go there. It needs to be the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Right? If you look to his death and his resurrection as your hope, then that's good. That is how you know that, in part, that you're saved.

And the last question is this. Do you long to obey all that Jesus says, even if you don't understand it and even if you don't know it?

Do you long to obey all that Jesus says, even if you don't know it and you don't understand it? Him being after the order of Melchizedek means our salvation is that secure.

[16:20] Second thing is the functions of the priest. The functions of the priest, you'll notice that in the text, it says you are a priest forever. And David is writing at a time when Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and parts of 1 Samuel have either been written or have happened.

And so all the information that we need to know what a priest is and how a priest functions is already written. And David is leaning upon that information in order to put forward that he's going to be a priest.

What does a priest do? There are several things, but I just want to point out two things. Two things. The first is that he makes a sacrifice for sin.

He makes a sacrifice for sin. This is what we call atonement. Atonement. The New Testament tells us that Christ is a priest.

And that he is making a sacrifice for sin. In Hebrews chapter 10, verse 12, Christ offered one sacrifice for sins for all time.

[17:26] Christ is a priest. He's the one who takes the sacrifice. He offers it to God the Father on our behalf. But the difference between Jesus and the other priests is that the other priests brought animals.

They brought bulls and goats that could never save. Jesus brought his own life. That's why John the Baptist calls him the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So we need to understand what this atonement means. And so let me just describe for you just briefly, then we'll move on to the next one. This atonement is this, that we were alienated from God, that we were enemies of God, that we broke God's law, and we were by nature children of wrath, as Ephesians 2 and John 3 tells us.

God's stance, God's posture towards us as humans is a posture of wrath and enmity because we have violated His holy commandments.

Atonement is the appeasing of God's anger. Atonement is appeasing of God's anger. So Christ sacrifices Himself and takes His life and His death upon the cross and it appeases the Father.

[18:53] Here's the Father, here's us, and here's Christ in the middle, and He appeases the Father's anger so that we might be saved. And the idea for this appeasement came from the Father.

It's not as though the Father didn't want to save us. It was His idea to send His world, His Son into this world, to save us. So this is the atonement.

This is what we're all familiar with. You know this. You know Jesus died on the cross for our sins. And you've got that. The second part of what the priest does is that he pleads the blood of the sacrifice continually.

It's what we call intercession. Intercession. Now in the book of Hebrews, chapter 7, verse 25, look at this passage here on the screen. It says, Consequently, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him.

So let me just pause right there. This passage is about our salvation. Okay? This is about our salvation. This translation uses save forever, but other older translations say that He's able to save to the uttermost.

[20:12] And the question is, why? How? And the rest of the verse answers the question. Since He always lives to make intercession for them.

In other words, the salvation that we have, it is and stays secure by the power of His indestructible life and also because He ever lives to make intercession for us.

He pleads His blood for us before the Father. Let me see if I can illustrate this and maybe this will come together for you. Okay? In the Old Testament, it's the Day of Atonement and you have to

sacrifice your animal for your sin.

You take your animal, you go up to the priest, you put your hands on the head of your animal, you confess your sin. As you confess your sin, they slit its throat and they catch its blood.

That is atonement. Right? That's atonement. You should have died, but you didn't. The Lamb died instead. But then the priest takes this blood, he goes past the veil, past the holy place, into the Holy of Holies and there at the Ark of the Covenant in which sits the Ten Commandments.

[ 21 : 33 ] The Ten Commandments stand as a testimony against you because you've broken God's law. But on top of the Ten Commandments is the mercy seat. Solid gold, angels with wings pointing towards one another and there at the middle, right at their wings, is the mercy seat on which the priest takes the blood from your sacrifice and drips it right at the mercy seat.

And he's pleading that blood of the sacrifice for you. So, that's intercession. Jesus himself, he has not only gone to the cross for us and died for us, but now stands in heaven with snail-scarred hands as a constant testimony and a constant reminder and a constant pleading with the Father, they're saved, and he is going to be doing that for all eternity.

So, your salvation is secure, not because you're pretty. Your salvation is secure, not because you had faith. Your salvation is secure, not because of anything that we did, but because of what he does as he pleads the blood to the Father on our behalf for all eternity.

And if you're not a Christian, this is the gospel. This is the gospel. This is why we preach. This is why we meet.

We've all been saved because of what Christ has done. You see what I'm saying? I mean, some of you, you're kind of looking at me like a deer in a headlights, and so I'm just wondering if you're here with me. But like, this is like so exciting to me.

[ 23 : 09 ] It's just like, my goodness, the glory that Jesus has done for us. It is just amazing. But if you're lost, if you're lost, what hope do you have?

What are you going to do? The law stands against you. You have lusted. You have murderous anger. You've coveted your neighbor's things. You have not loved God most of all.

And because of that, you stand condemned. Your only hope is Jesus. But as a Christian, as a Christian, Christ is pleading for you even now, he didn't, he didn't save you and then just kick you out and say, I've given you salvation, now go make something of it.

Hebrews tells us that he's the author and the perfecter of our faith. It should cause us, it should cause us to delight in him more than anything else in the world.

is he your one delight? Let me ask you the question this way and most people don't really like this question.

[ 24 : 51 ] I just want you to think about this. You can have heaven right now. All right? No more tears, no more sorrow, no more dying, no more, no more disease, no more pestilence, no more anything.

You can have heaven right now. You can have all the loved ones that you want. Think about those that have gone on before you, think about the ones that are still here and you can choose and all of those loved ones that you want to be with you would be with you.

So you can have heaven, none of the bad stuff, all the people you love. The only thing is, is Jesus would not be there. Would you still want to go?

Because that exposes your heart. Because my prayer is that we would rather have an eternity of suffering with Jesus than an eternity of bliss without.

When we see that he ever lives to make intercession for us, it ought to stir our heart with devotion for him. And the third and final part of this is the faithfulness of Christ as priest.

[ 26 : 11 ] We see his faithfulness in three ways. It says that he is a priest by a sworn oath. A sworn oath. This sworn oath is a covenant.

A covenant is an oath-bound promise. The best way to understand this is that if two people were going to promise something to one another to make it more secure, they would make that promise oath-bound by taking an oath.

And what they would do is they would take animals, they would cut the animals in half, and they would put them on either side. They would both walk through the animals swearing that if I do not fulfill my promise, then let be done to me what's been done to these animals.

And so we have God who makes covenants, but when God makes a covenant, he doesn't swear just his part, he does it all. That's why in Genesis chapter 15, Abraham has this vision of God

passing through the animals as a torch and a smoking pot because God is saying, I swear by myself to my hurt, I will do this for you.

So, what we have here in Psalm 110 is the father making a sworn oath to the son that the son would be a priest forever.

[ 27 : 27 ] The covenant cannot be broken. We see the faithfulness in a second way and that is that he is sworn and will not change his mind or he will not repent.

He's never going to change this. This is the way it's going to be. Christ is the priest after the order of Melchizedek. And then we see the third way and that is a priest forever.

Forever. Never ceasing to be a priest. So the faithfulness of Christ of the father in this priesthood is seen by the oath by the forever and by the not changing his mind.

Now, the question is, okay, well this is between the father and the son. How does that hit us? I mean, it's great to know that the father promised the son. It's great to know that they're not going to change their minds.

It's great to know that this is going to be forever. But I mean, what does this really have to do with us? Right? It's a promise from the father to the son. Well, it's a little bit analogous to a husband and wife and their covenant promise to one another and the children that come out of that marriage.

[ 28 : 42 ] What should happen? I know that our world is broken and things don't always work the way they should. But what should happen when a husband and a wife covenant together to one another? What kind of benefit do the children get out of such an arrangement?

Many. Even just while the wife is with child, look at how the husband ought to take care of her, protect her, be there for her, and the whole time the children benefit because they're in their mother. The promises that Christ has made, that the father has made to Christ are ours and we benefit from them because we are in Christ.

And this should bring us joy and delight because God came to save sinners and he didn't have to. He made us but he didn't have to. A lot of people want to present God as being someone who was lonely and needy and he needed somebody to love but here he is, the father and the son in perfect harmony together.

They had each other, they didn't need anymore. But they wanted more. And so he created us and he saved us and because the infinite unchanging glorious father treated his infinite unchanging glorious son with perfect love, righteousness, and faithfulness, anyone found in Christ receives the benefits and the effects of how the father deals with the son.

[ 30 : 13 ] Because of his oath bound promise, he has canceled the certificate of debt against us. I think where this makes me go most often is I just want to encourage us to stop trying to feel our way through these things.

If we were to go back to that question and ask someone, because I've asked this and I've heard people tell me this, how do you know you're saved? And they'll look at me and they'll say, well, I feel saved.

I hope you understand that that's irrelevant. How we feel is irrelevant. How do we know we're saved can't be based upon how I feel because there's some days that I feel it and some days I don't.

And be honest, there's some days you don't feel saved either. You look at your life, you look at your behavior and you're kind of going like, well, if I were God, I would fry me today.

Because there's, and so we don't, we don't know that we're saved because we feel that we're saved. We don't know that we're doing the right thing before God because we feel something. Here's the problem.

[ 31 : 40 ] The problem is is that we've got too much of our emotions into both are we saved and how should we live as saved people. The truth of the matter is that it's written right down in Scripture for us.

He said, he said that if we would call upon the name of the Lord, we would be saved. You know what? I don't have to feel what that's like. I don't have to have any goosebumps and I don't have to have anybody else feel any goosebumps for me.

God said it. That settles it. He said, He said that. So we have to get to the place that because of His faithfulness to His Word, His faithfulness to His promises, He said it.

That is enough. So as we walk before the Lord, we must not ask things like how do you feel about your relationship with the Lord?

But we need to ask questions like what's God teaching you from His Word? How are you being obedient to what He has written down in His Word? What sins has He pointed out in His Word that you're struggling with?

[ 32 : 47 ] How sweet do you find the reminder of who He is from the Word? There was a lady that I met once and I asked her if she was saved.

She said, Oh yes, I know I'm saved. I was like, Oh, great. How do you know? And she began to recount to me all of the blessings and they were interesting blessings but there's nowhere in Scripture you can find that says you will know you're saved because you have blessings in your life. God brings the rain upon the just and the unjust the same way. You know you're saved because the Word tells us we're sinners. The Word tells us what Jesus has done.

The Word tells us that we need to believe and repent and that is it. Christ, our High Priest.

You know, there's going to be some of you that you're going to struggle a little bit maybe with some of the things I'm saying maybe because as you look at your life you're saying you know, I've been religious and I thought that I was saved but like there's things that you're saying Brady that make me kind of wonder and that's okay.

[ 34 : 06 ] I think it's good and healthy for you to look at yourself with some skepticism. And so I just want to encourage you to not hide that. Don't be embarrassed by that.

I'm always willing. You call me we'll sit down we'll talk about it we'll take any length of time. You know, two minutes here at the end of the service is not enough time to deal with something like that, right?

Call me I'll come over you come to the office we'll sit down we'll deal with it. Don't be embarrassed. If you're listening to what I'm saying and you're kind of going like wow, it sounds like you're saying this and I don't think I agree with that.

Oh, great. Great. Call me. Let's talk about it. You know, I told you study God's Word to see if these things are true and if you think I'm wrong then love me enough to confront me.

because if I'm believing something that's not true and you're like oh, this is not true then please love me enough to confront me with the truth. But whatever we do if these things are true then our love and our devotion to Jesus needs to deepen.

[ 35 : 15 ] so what will you do with that? Let's pray.